A Philoſophical Diſſertation UPON DEATH.

COMPOSED

For the CONSOLATION *of the* UNHAPPY.

By a FRIEND *to* TRUTH.

Bono loco res humanæ ſunt, quòd nemo niſi vitio ſuo miſer eſt. Placet? Vive. Non placet? Licet tibi reverti unde veniſti. Seneca in Epiſt.

By Count Passerani.

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A Philosophical Dissertation

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On Account of the Bold Truths contain'd in this PAMPHLET, *the Author (who wrote it in* Italian) *was oblig'd to fly the Kingdom; the Tranſlator was ſent to* Newgate, *and the Publiſher confin'd in the* Fleet.

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LONDON:
Re-printed for the Benefit of a Friend to the AUTHOR.

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UPON

DEATH.

DREADFUL and moſt horrible has ever been the Idea, which, in a manner, all Mankind have formed to themſelves concerning DEATH. An Idea ſo ancient, and ſo univerſal, that the Majority of them have believed, and do ſtill believe it to be innate, or natural. And becauſe in this *Treatiſe*, my De-

ſign is to prove it not to be ſo, but really acquired, as all other Ideas are acquired, I run a great Riſque of being taxed with Temerity, by ſtanding up in Oppoſition to a Sentiment almoſt univerſally embraced. Nevertheleſs, I gird myſelf to the Enterpriſe; not ſo much with a View of freeing the Minds of others from that falſe Terror, as in order to fortify my own Spirits againſt ſo vain a Belief.

My Subject I ſhall divide into *Two* Points, or Heads. —— In the *Firſt*, I ſhall declare What I mean by the UNIVERSE, and by the Word NATURE; whereof frequent Mention will be made in my *Diſcourſe*: As alſo, What is LIFE, and What is DEATH: And from thence I ſhall examine, Whether the Dread which Men conceive of *Death* be naturally innate,

Innate, or merely contracted and ill-grounded. —— In the *Second*, I ſhall diſcuſs, Whether or no, It be lawful to deprive one's ſelf of *Life*; and ſhall prove the ſame to be at all Times a laudable Action, and at no Time blameable; natural, and not contrary to *Nature*.

By the *Univerſe*, I comprehend the infinite Space which contains the immenſe Matter, ſowed, or interſperſed throughout with moſt exiguous Vacuities, wherein, with an eternal Variation, are moved to and fro its moſt tenuous Particles; which Particles, or Atoms could not be at all capable of the leaſt Motion, if the Whole was completely filled. This Matter, and this Motion are inſeparable: For it is a Thing no leſs impoſſible, that Motion ſhould be found where Matter is not, than

than to find Matter deſtitute of Motion: Becauſe we are to underſtand, that all Matter is compounded of a Diverſity of Contraries, which, being intermingled, cannot in any wiſe be in Repoſe.

THAT Matter always is a Mixture, is ſufficiently known to the Chymiſts; who never have found, nor ever can find a Body purely ſimple. That Motion is the Propriety of Matter, appears by Matter itſelf, which is throughout replete with Pores, into and out of which are continually entering and iſſuing the ever-active Atoms, inceſſantly employed either in the Formation and Maintenance, or elſe in forwarding the Decay and Diſſolution of Bodies. That Motion is generally diſperſed throughout all Matter, all Bodies atteſt it, by the continual Mutations they undergo:

dergo: Not only the ſoft Bodies, but likewiſe the hard ones, as Stones and Metals, do in Time ſuffer Diſſolution; thro' their internal Motion, which cauſes to them a perpetual Exhalation of Particles from their reſpective Pores, as alſo thro' their external Motion, from the Etherial or Aerial Matter wherewith they are continually aſſaulted.

I KNOW that ſome Perſons, from the Solidity of certain Bodies, imagine them to be in perpetual Repoſe; and among theſe Bodies principally the Diamond, becauſe they could not ever diſcover any Alteration in the ſaid Stone. But thoſe who talk in that manner do not talk rationally: For, to argue with any Foundation, they muſt make appear, that the Diamond is ſimple, and not compoſed of Parts, and conſequently is without Pores; and being ſo,

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it could not ever be cut, worked, or broken: But ſince we ſee, that it is actually cut, broken, and diminiſhed, even juſt as one pleaſes, we are ſure that it is full of Pores like other Bodies, and from thence, like them, not ſimple and immutable, but ſubject to Variation.

HENCE, all can be ſaid is, That every individual Body is in perpetual Motion; but with this Difference, that in the more ſolid Bodies the Motion is leſs perceptible, as being abundantly ſlower than in the ſoft ones, which, having their Particles weakly connected, are eaſily disjoined, and their Motion becomes more ſenſible, as being of greater Velocity. In ſhort, Motion is to Matter as eſſential as is Heat to Fire.

MATTER

MATTER then and MOTION are of an eternal Co-exiſtence, ſince it is not poſſible that they ſhould be derived from NOTHING: Becauſe as *Nothing* has not any Propriety, it is unapt for the Production of any Thing; nor can a Thing which has any Exiſtence at all ever be annihilated. But in caſe any one would be ſo ſtupid as to go about to defend a contrary Opinion, in order to eſtabliſh it with any Foundation, he muſt neceſſarily prove, that from Time to Time certain Beings have appeared which never exiſted, or indeed, that ſome which have exiſted have diſappeared, neither of which Caſes ever has, or ever will be ſeen: Becauſe as every Thing which does exiſt, does exiſt neceſſarily, it muſt therefore exiſt eternally; the Modifications of Matter, cauſed by the Motion it has in itſelf, by a Law eternal are

ever the ſame, and from which they cannot ever be varied.

THIS *Matter*, modified by *Motion* into an infinite Number of various Forms, is that which I call NATURE. Of this the Qualities and Attributes are, *Power*, *Wiſdom*, and *Perfection*, all which ſhe poſſeſſes in the higheſt Degree. By Means of the *Firſt*, ſhe has always been able to form whatſoever ſhe pleaſed, and what ſhe knew to be requiſite. With Aſſiſtance of the *Second*, ſhe has been capacitated to diſtinguiſh what was convenient for the formed Beings, and to know how to provide the ſame. By Help of the *Third*, ſhe has been perpetually employing herſelf in the Formation of a numberleſs Infinity of Species, all not only neceſſary and perfect, but inimitable and eternal.

NATURE

NATURE, being herſelf ſuperlatively perfect, ever was and ever will be active; nor can ſhe once ceaſe from operating, even for the ſhorteſt Inſtant, or in the ſmalleſt Part of the whole Univerſe: Becauſe Inaction is the very Summit of Imperfection. This conſtant and perpetual Operation is that which I term the *Courſe*, or the unalterable *Law* of *Nature*.

By CREATION, or LIFE, I mean a certain Modification of Matter, which forms a Body different from what it before was: And as to DEATH, I am going to declare my Sentiments concerning it.

DEATH is a Diſſolution of the Corporeal Parts, the which, ſeparating from each other, do then aſſume other Forms, and receive other different Mo-

tions: Becauſe Nature, ever buſied in creating and deſtroying, makes Uſe of the Parts of one Body deſtroyed thence to form another Body which ſhe is creating. So that what befalls Creatures when they *die*, is the loſing their priſtine Form; nay, and loſing the ſame intirely and viſibly: Not after the manner as they are every Moment loſing it, in the ſmall Particles which exhale thro' the Pores of all Bodies in general; which (by reaſon they in part recover them thro' the Suſtenence they receive from the Earth, Air, *&c.* or from the Aliments they take in) do change after a manner inſenſible or unapparent to our Senſes: Notwithſtanding which Imperceptibility, we in Time diſcover the ſaid Mutations, as is to be obſerved in what we term the different *Stages* of *Life*, in all ſuch Bodies as endure not ſo long, or at leaſt not longer than our

ſelves: Tho' in ſome certain Corporeal Beings which are abundantly more permanent than Man, we cannot in any wiſe make a like Diſcovery, by reaſon that what we may call their *Infancy* muſt continue for perhaps A Hundred, or A Thouſand Years, their *Childhood*, Two Hundred, or Two Thouſand Years, and ſo on proportionably; as we behold in Metals, and in Stones, wherein it is not poſſible for us to diſcern the leaſt Kind of Variation: Nevertheleſs we know of a Certainty, that no one Body at all is perpetual, and that every Being in general, ſooner or later, anſwerably to its reſpective Solidity and Qualities, muſt inevitably undergo a Diſſolution.

SUBJECT to this eternal and unalterable Decree is the Human Body, as are all other Bodies; nor is its State and

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Condition more unhappy than theirs, but even the very ſame: Since the Human Body is moſt certain to loſe nothing but only its Form, as I ſaid before; for the Matter whereof it was compoſed exiſts for ever. So that, the ſame individual Matter remaining, and therein the ſame Motion everlaſtingly continuing, we poſitively ought not ever to ſay; That the Body which once was called a *Man*, a *Tree*, or the like, having loſt *that* its Form, has therefore loſt its Being or Eſſence; but that the Parts whereof it was compounded have, at the ſame Time, formed new Bodies, aſſumed new Shapes and new Lives. Theſe indiſputable Truths examined and eſtabliſhed, we ought not to be under Apprehenſions of loſing our Exiſtence when we die; ſince we only ceaſe to exiſt in one ſort, in order to begin to exiſt in another.

NEITHER

NEITHER can the ſilly Objection, uſually made againſt this Sentiment, be of any Weight or Validity: I mean; "That in caſe we ever had any pre-"vious Beings, before we aſſumed Hu-"mane Form, we ſhould certainly have "thereof ſome Notice." This cannot, I ſay, be of any Weight; ſince in order to have this come to paſs, we abſolutely muſt always have had Bodies organized exactly like theſe we now poſſeſs, to have enabled them to form like Impreſſions, and conceive the ſame Imaginations as were originally for them formed and conceived. If, when a Man is dead, the Parts of his Body ſhould re-unite, and again form another Body in every reſpect like to his own, or, to ſay better, ſhould all his own individual Particles return into their former Poſitions, each of them re-aſſuming its own priſtine Station, it

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is moſt evident, that the ſaid Body would aſſuredly return to have the very ſame Senſations. But as Nature delights in Variety, ſhe never forms twice one and the ſame Body, nor does ſhe ever permit a Body, after Diſſolution, to recover its priſtine Form, even for a Moment; from whence it occurs, that the Body or Bodies which ſucceed it, being differently organized and diſpoſed, muſt conſequently have new and different Senſations, or new and different Movements, from which Movements do proceed all the Operations of Bodies.

By this we ſee, that a Child of Six Years of Age does not remember any Thing of what he did in his Mother's Womb, nay, nor even the Actions of his Three firſt Years. And when he is arrived at Man's Eſtate, he no longer

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remembers what he did when he was Six Years old. And laſtly, when he is grown ſuperannuate, he utterly loſes the Remembrance of all he ever has done, during the whole Courſe of his Life, excepting perhaps ſome of the moſt recent of his Operations: And this becauſe the intire Diſpoſition of his Organization has been ſundry Times totally varied and diverſified. From hence it proceeds, that the whole Time he has lived and operated, and whereof he now no longer retains any Memory, is to him the very ſame as if none of it all had ever been: Yet cannot it be ſaid of him, that he was not in Life all that Time, or that he had not done abundance of Things, notwithſtanding he cannot now recollect any Part of thoſe his *quondam* Tranſactions; becauſe to ſay ſo would be a very notorious Abſurdity: Since we

know by Experience, that, at different Times of our Lives, we have eaten certain Viands and Fruits, and had certain Recreations whereof we are now quite oblivious; yet cannot we deny our once having great Pleaſure and Satisfaction in eating thoſe well-ſeaſoned Viands, and delicious Fruits, and in ſo recreating ourſelves: And we alſo know, that our preſent Forgetfulneſs of all thoſe Matters has not prevented our taſting and reliſhing the Viands and Fruits which we have ſince eaten, nor our being delighted with the Diverſions which we have ſince taken.

For the very ſame Reaſon, if a Man, in changing State, does not any longer remember any of the Pleaſures he enjoyed while he was in this Life, his having loſt the Remembrance thereof will not be any manner of Hinder-

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ance to his Enjoyment of new Pleaſures in the new Life he is entering upon.

The Fear of Death, therefore, with regard to Annihilation, cannot be natural; ſince the Annihilation of any one Body whatſoever is not to be met with in Nature: Neither can the Dread of paſſing from one State unto another be natural; ſince Nature delights in and is deſirous of Change. The Fear of Death, I ſay, cannot be innate, ſince Infants, Idiots, the Mad and the Superannuated Perſons, wholly deſtitute of Memory, have it not. No, it cannot be innate; ſince if it were ſo, it muſt be equally imprinted in all Mankind, which it is not, by reaſon that not only Infants, and thoſe others above-cited, but even abundance of ſenſible Perſons, in the very Flower of

their Age, die without the leaſt Sign of Fear or Terror.

WHENCE then does proceed this Dread? It proceeds from the *Knowledge* of a Danger: And this Danger is *known* either thro' ſome actual Experience, or elſe it is known without any ſuch Experience, but merely from a Credit repoſed in ſome one who tells a plauſible Story of ſuch or ſuch Things being dangerous. Of theſe the *Firſt* is real; The *Second* may be fallacious. However, neither the *one* nor the *other Knowledge* is innate, or born with us, but contracted long after our being born.

FOR Example: Let us ſuppoſe a Child of Five Years old, ignorant of the venomous Quality of Serpents, and whoſe Mother ſhould preſent before him a Dove, together with a Serpent, finely ſpeckled with beautiful Colours:

Very

Very probable it is, that he would more readily approach towards the Serpent, on account of its fine Coat, than he would towards the Dove. And let us ſuppoſe him grievouſly bitten by the ſaid Serpent; it is moſt certain, that another Time he would endeavour to keep out of its Reach, to avoid being again ſo hurt; and his Dread would be very juſt and well-grounded. But now let us ſuppoſe, on the contrary, that his Mother ſhould afterwards bring him a Swallow, and ſhould caution him to have a Care thereof, filling his Imagination with a Dread of its doing him the ſame Damage as the Serpent had done him; doubtleſs he would be afraid of being hurt by that little Bird; and his Fear would be vain and ill-grounded.

FROM theſe Suppoſitions we plainly ſee, that the Dread of *Death* is not innate, but that it commences in us from the Time that we have *Knowledge* of the Danger of *Death*; as alſo that this *Knowledge* may be fallacious, when the ſame is not founded on Experience. Now the Dangers, which Men fear to encounter after *Death*, are not founded on Experience; ſince no Man could ever *die* Twice, in order, by the *Firſt Death*, to *know* the ſaid Dangers, and to *dread* them againſt the *Second Time* he was to *die*.

THIS Danger, which Men *know* not by Practice or Experience, is come to their *Knowledge* by theſe Means, *viz.* In all Countries, and at all Times, there have been found ambitious Men, who, not contenting themſelves with that State of Equality which Nature had

had given them, took it into their Heads to thirſt for Dominion over others; and becauſe they could not, by open Compulſion, bring about their Deſigns, they employed Cunning and Artifice: And what has conſtantly occaſioned their ſucceeding in thoſe their Undertakings, has been the lamentable Ignorance of the People whom they ſought to bring into Subjection: Becauſe, they being ignorant, the others could make their Advantage of an Eclipſe, a Comet, a Peal of Thunder, or of ſome other Phænomenon, or Accident, to induce them to believe that the Deities were incenſed againſt them, and with thoſe Signs were threatening to puniſh or deſtroy them, except thoſe angry Divinities were immediately appeaſed. After this manner the Fear of the Gods came to take Impreſſion in the Hearts of Men. This Impreſſion made,

made, those Projectors began to teach the Methods of pacifying the Deities, prescribing to their too credulous Audience, Prayers, Fastings, Sacrifices, Vows, Offerings, &c. acquainting them which and which Things were to those imaginary Deities pleasing and acceptable, and which they detested and would most rigorously punish, not only *in this Life*, but also *after Death*. Thus did those daring Impostors remain Interpreters of the *Will Divine*, and Lords of the *Wills* of *Men!*

This Credence established in Human Minds, Men feared to *die*, not merely thro' a Dread or Reluctance to cease from being in Life, but for Fear of encountering new and more grievous Evils than any they had known or suffered while they were living. And what I here say is confirmed to us by Ex-

Experience; ſince we ſee, that little Children, ſuch as have not as yet been capable of receiving from their Mothers, &c. any Manner of Idea of the Pains and Puniſhments of the other Life, do die without the leaſt Fear or Apprehenſion; neither do they undergo any Pain or Torment but what proceeds from the Diſeaſe which conſumes them: But they have not their Spirits on the Rack with the horrible Contemplations of Infernal Flames, becauſe they have not thereof any *Knowledge*: Contemplations! which render *Death* moſt dreadful to Men, and which cauſe them to ſuffer a Thouſand racking Tortures, none of which they would undergo, were not their Minds clouded with the falſe Idea of a Danger which exiſts not. Let us then remove away this vain Fear from Human Intellects, and we ſhall ſee

Men will quit Life willingly: The which is exemplified in thoſe who *die* Martyrs, who with abundance of Pleaſure endure the greateſt and moſt cruel Tortures, and moſt ardently deſire to loſe their Lives on that Occaſion, becauſe they firmly believe they ſhall not meet with that menaced Danger, ſince they ceaſe to live purely for the Sake and Defenſe of their Religion.

THE falſe Ideas which we acquire thro' the evil Inſtructions which we receive from thoſe who are intruſted with our firſt Education, are what cauſe in us this Fear of *Death*. The bad Principles which we ſuck in with our Milk are what, taking faſt Root within us, do adulterate our Minds and corrupt our Imaginations. Let us then purify our Intellectuals, making Reflections on the Falſity of thoſe Principles,

ciples, which derive their Origin only from the Malice and Impoſtures of Men. Let us paſs a ſtrict Examination on all *Beliefs*, and we ſhall know, that they are all the Offſprings of Human Wit and Policy; ſince they all have the very ſame Characters, and all the ſelf-ſame Foundation, as I have clearly demonſtrated in another of my *Performances**; and then we ſhall not fear *Death*. We ſhall not fear it, I ſay; becauſe we ſhall then comprehend *Death* to be what delivers us from the Perſecutions of our Adverſaries, from the Tyranny of the Mighty, from the Diſquiets which moleſt us, from the Anxieties which cruelly torment us, from the Infirmities which tyrannize over us, and, in a Word, from all Miſery. Finally, it is *Death* alone which frees us from the ſlaviſh Bondage of

* *In my* Hiſtorical *and* Political *Diſcourſes.* Dif. XI.

Men, rendering us all Equals, ſuch as Nature created us when ſhe gave us our Exiſtence. To fear Death then is an Error; A truly great Error! Since the Infant, the Idiot, the Mad, the Superannuated, and the Maintainer of ſome fond Religious Chimera, fear it not, notwithſtanding they are devoid of Reaſon; why then ſhould it be feared by a Rational Man, having a Capacity of judging Reaſon, and of conceiving the Truths here exhibited?

In order to our well handling this our *Second* Point, or Head, we muſt examine; Whether there are ſuch Things as Good and Bad Morals, as is the vulgar Opinion: Becauſe in diſcuſſing that important Queſtion, we may eaſily diſcover, Whether or no it be lawful for a Man to deprive himſelf of Life,

THE Ideas which Men have conceived concerning Good Morals and Bad ones, are not innate, but really contracted, or acquired. For were they engraven naturally in the Hearts of Men, all Mankind in general muſt neceſſarily have them; which is not ſo: Since we are experimentally taught, that all whatever we call Bad, as Murder, Theft, Adultery, Fornication, Inceſt, Sodomy, Rebellion, Treachery, *&c.* have always been, and ſtill are believed, by abundance of different People, to be Good; as Hiſtories, both ancient and modern, do teſtify, and the ſeveral Cuſtoms of ſundry Nations, in all Ages, do ſufficiently confirm.

DO we not read, that Theft was eſteemed a commendable and virtuous Action among the *Spartans*; and Adultery the ſame among both the *Romans*

and

and the *Lacedemonians?* When the *Romans* had got as many Children by their Wives as they cared for, they might either lend or give their ſaid Wives to others who were deſirous of having Offspring by them. A *Lacedemonian* might ask a Husband, poſſeſſed of a beautiful Woman who had brought him fine Children, to lend him his ſaid Wife, that he likewiſe might beget on her ſuch fine Children: Nay more; if the Husband ſaw a ſprightly young Man, hale, vigorous, and well-proportioned, he would intreat him to make Uſe of his Wife, that thro' his Means he might have a handſome Breed.

THE *Jews* imagined they did a Deed exceedingly pleaſing in the Sight of GOD, when, with unheard of Treachery, they ſtole away the Goods

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of the *Egyptians*. Nay, they believed that they acted most piously when they ſlaughtered ſuch Numbers of innocent People, and poſſeſſed themſelves of their Lands and Subſtance. The *Romans* thought they were doing a very glorious Action, when, violating the public Faith, they raviſhed the *Sabine* Women. *Minos* made a Law in *Crete* *, which compelled the Husbands to ſeparate themſelves from their Wives, during a certain Time, in order to prevent the Birth of too many Children; and at the ſame Time gave general Licence to all ſo diſpoſed, to quench their Concupiſcence with Sodomy: Certain it is, that the *Cretans* held the Act of Sodomy in high Veneration, becauſe they believed that *Minos* inſtituted it by Order from *Jupiter*. Fornication was deemed lawful among thoſe of the

* *Now* Candia.

Hebrew

Hebrew Nation; as was alſo what the Law terms Single-Adultery; ſince from Scripture we learn, that *Abraham*, *David*, *Solomon*, and abundance more, were married, and yet had Concubines. The *Romiſh* Church forbids her Prieſts, *&c.* to marry, and ſuffers them to fornicate. The *Egyptians*, *Carthaginians*, *Grecians* and *Romans* eſteemed thoſe to be very vertuous Men, who voluntarily ſlew themſelves, either to avoid falling into their Enemies Power, or for the Good of their Country, or to prevent their loſing what Honour and Renown they already had acquired, nay and even if they did it only becauſe they were weary of living. Thoſe People alſo apparently believed themſelves to be doing Actions ſuperlatively grateful to the Supreme Divinities, while, with ſuch impious Barbarity, they were ſacrificing at their Altars ſuch Numbers of Human

man Victims. The Primitive *Chriſtians* highly praiſed ſuch Women and Virgins as killed themſelves when they found they were in manifeſt Danger of having their Chaſtity violated. The *Draſians*, a People of Mount *Libanus*, have no Abhorrence to either Inceſt or Adultery, ſince they cohabit with their own Daughters, and, at a ſolemn Feſtival, on a certain Day in the Year, they interchangeably make Uſe of each others Wives, in Token of mutual Friendſhip. Every one knows that Polygamy, Adultery and Fornication are generally permitted to all Male *Mahometans*, ſince they may legally marry four Wives, and keep as many Concubines as they are able to maintain. Thoſe of *Negapatan*, and of ſome other *Eaſt-India* Provinces, ſend their Daughters to the Temples, that they may be deflowered by the Prieſts,

and believe that, in ſo doing, they make a moſt holy Sacrifice to their Gods: Theſe young Maidens are conveyed to the Temples in a very large Chariot, at which Time many Men, out of the Ardency of a Religious Zeal, deſperately caſt themſelves naked on the Ground in the Road, ſo that the Chariot Wheels, paſſing over their Bodies or Limbs, cruſh their Bones in Splinters, by which they imagine they die Martyrs, and therefore go directly and immediately to Paradiſe. The very ſame Sentiment and Belief had the Primitive *Chriſtians*, when they ſpontaneouſly embraced Death to confeſs the Name of *Chriſt*.

THE *Caffirs*, a People of *South-Africa*, have little or no Regard to the Laws of Matrimony; and their Women, in Token of Gratitude to thoſe

Men

Men from whom they have received any ſmall Favour or Courteſy, fail not obliging thoſe their Benefactors with a Sight of their Nudities, the doing which Action unasked is, among them, conſidered as a very extraordinary Piece of Civility. The Idolaters who inhabit in the City of *Surat*, (appertaining to the Emperor of *Hindoſtan*, otherwiſe called the *Grand Mogul*) after they are dead, being to be burned, their Wives voluntarily and joyfully go and caſt themſelves into the flaming Pile, together with the Bodies of their defunct Conſorts; and this they do, becauſe they believe they ſhall enjoy the Embraces of their Husbands in the next World, and alſo that thereby they ſhall gain a never-dying Reputation. The like is done by the Women of *Negapatan* before-mentioned, and alſo by

thoſe of diverſe other Parts of thoſe Oriental Regions.

But ſtill far more extraordinary is what is done by the Wives of thoſe of the City *Caſtra*: For when the Bodies of their dead Husbands are laid in the long and ſtraight Vaults appointed for them, thoſe affectionate Widows ſpontaneouſly cauſe themſelves to be likewiſe incloſed therein, where they moſt miſerably periſh with Hunger, Thirſt and Stench. The Inhabitants of *Mexco*, Capital of *Japan*, do at every New Moon, ſacrifice the Virginity of the moſt beautiful Damſel in the City; which Sacrifice is performed in the following Manner; The Maiden is, by her Parents, *&c.* delivered into the Hands of a Crew of nervous young *Bonzies*, or Prieſts, who conduct

duct her to the Temple, and lead her up to the Idol to whom the ſame is dedicated: This done, they extinguiſh all the Lamps, and take their Pleaſure with her: When they are all ſufficiently ſated, they conduct her to a certain finely-illuminated Apartment, where they paſs the Time in Mirth and Rejoicing, congratulating her on the Felicity ſhe has enjoyed in the Careſſes of the Holy Idol: They then convey her out of the Temple, and ſhe is received with exceeding great Joy by the People, who venerate her as a Saint. Behold how, in all Parts of the World, Prieſts abuſe Mens Credulity!

THE Civility of the Noblemen of the City of *Patania* (ſituate in the Gulf of *Bengala*) is ſo exceſſive, that they take a Pride in proffering the Enjoyment

joyment of their Daughters, Nieces, *&c.* to ſuch Strangers as come thither; and, generally ſpeaking, they themſelves conduct them on board the Ships, that they may ſolace the ſaid Strangers during their Abode in thoſe Quarters; and all this is, by thoſe noble Perſonages, done in ſo loving, ſo engaging, and ſo friendly a Manner, that it is not eaſy for the Parties thus obliged to counter-balance the tranſcendent Favour, even with the utmoſt Returns of Gratitude: And when the Veſſels depart, thoſe contaminated Laſſes, extremely well pleaſed, return home to their Friends; and, inſtead of bluſhing on account of their having been thus proſtituted, they glory at the ſignal Honours they fancy they have received.

In the firſt Voyages made by the *Spaniards* and *Portugueſes* to *America*, they

they were courteouſly received by thoſe People, who came ſinging and dancing to meet them, offering them Fruits, and their Women.

In the Empire of *China*, Adultery and Sodomy are tolerated, in the Men, by the Laws both Divine and Human. The Husbands of the City of *Calicut*, in *Eaſt-India*, very lovingly interchange their Wives. The People of the Mountain *Albors*, in *Perſia*, willingly ſacrifice themſelves to the Flames, when they are grown aged. The *Lacedemonians* cauſed their own Children to be ſmothered in the Mud, when found to be born with any natural Defect. And in Fine, many Nations greatly venerate, or at leaſt willingly tolerate every one of thoſe Things which, by the *Chriſtians* and by ſundry other People, are utterly condemned,

condemned, as may be ſeen in the beſt and moſt authentic Relations we have extant.

ALSO Rebellions and Parricides were and ſtill are deemed moſt pious and glorious Actions, when undertaken and committed in order to free the Country from Tyranny: As *Pelopidas*, *Epaminondas*, *Thraſibulus*, *Hermodius*, *Ariſtogbiton*, *Philopæmen*, *Lucius Brutus*, *Publius Valerius*, *Marcus Brutus*, *Caius Caſſius*, *Cato*, with a Multitude of others among the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*, who were both the Authors and Executors thereof, have been and ever will be very highly reverenced and eſteemed.

AND in like manner among the *Jews*, thoſe who rebelled againſt, or who killed Tyrants, as *Moſes*, *Othniel*, *Ehud*,

Ehud, *Barack*, *Gideon*, *Judith*, *Samſon*, *David*, *Jehu*, the *Machabees*, and many more, were exceedingly commended, as the Sacred Scriptures do amply teſtify.

AMONG modern Rebellions worthy of eternal Praiſe, are thoſe of the *Hollanders*, the *Engliſh*, the *Switzers*, and the *Genevans*: Some to ſhake off the cruel and inſupportable Yokes of the *Spaniards* and *Germans*, reſtoring Liberty to their Countries; and others to prevent their becoming Bond-Slaves to the Pope, and rid themſelves of a Prince who went about to re-eſtabliſh *Popery* in his States, and violated the National Laws by endeavouring to uſurp the Rights of the People.

THE Patricides *Baltaſar Gerard*, *Jacques Clement*, *Jean Chaſtel*, and

Francois Ravillac, believed they did moſt meritorious and holy Deeds, when they aſſaſſinated the Prince of *Orange*, and the Third and Fourth *Henries*, Kings of *France*, notwithſtanding that the *firſt* and the *laſt* of thoſe Three Princes were the beſt deſerving Princes of their Times: The *Romiſh* Church, with Multitudes of her Laity, did extol and vaunt of the ſaid Exploits; nay and ſeveral noted Pen-men ſcrupled not writing florid Apologies for thoſe infamous Parricides, and among the reſt, even the Pontiff *Sixtus* V. himſelf.

AND indeed all the greateſt Inhumanities imaginable, Spoilings, Perfidies, with other the moſt enormous and deteſtable Perpetrations, are, in every Nation whatever, reputed juſt and commendable, provided the ſame are practiſed

tiſed towards ſuch as are Enemies to the reſpective Creeds of the Perpetrators. Thus did the *Mahometans* believe they acted very piouſly, while they were barbarouſly deſtroying ſo many Nations of People, and uſurping their Poſſeſſions, becauſe they refuſed to ſubmit to the Doctrine of *Al-Coran*. A like Belief and Opinion had our *Weſtern Chriſtians*, when they undertook the ſeveral *Croiſades* againſt the *Mahometan Saracens*. Yet incomparably more inhuman were the *Spaniards* and *Portugueſes* to ſome *Aſiatic* and *African* People, but particularly to the *Americans*, than the *Mahometans* have ever been to even the moſt ſtrenuous Oppoſers of their Religion: It being notorious, that to all thoſe who will be any Way prevailed on to embrace the *Muſſulman* Creed, they indulge with all the ſame Privileges, Liberties and

Immunities they themſelves enjoy; and to thoſe who will not, when they have intirely conquered them, they generouſly not only grant Life and a competent Livelihood, but ſuffer them, in Quality of Vaſſals or Subjects, to enjoy their Conſciences unmoleſted. Whereas the *others*, with a more than ferine Savageneſs, cruelly and ſhamefully in a manner quite exterminated whole Nations of the Inhabitants of that new-found World, tho' the Majority of them had been forcibly compelled to profeſs themſelves Converts to the *Catholic* Religion; and all this thro' no other real Motive, than that they might remain quiet Poſſeſſors of thoſe opulent Regions which they ſo perfidiouſly had uſurped.

WHAT greater Cruelty was ever committed by Man, than that in 1282 by

by the *Sicilians?* With a moſt horrible Perfidy they, in one Night, baſely murdered all the *French* throughout that whole Iſland, in a manner merely at the Inſtigation of Pope *Nicholas* III. who favoured *Don Pedro*, King of *Aragon:* Nay ſo far did their pious Fury extend, that they ripped open the Bellies of all ſuch *Sicilian* Women as were married to *French* Men, to deſtroy their Fruit, if they had any, that ſo they might extirpate the whole Race from that Kingdom.

NO leſs cruel and perfidious was the Maſſacre of the *Proteſtants* in *France*, in the Year 1572, whereat Fathers ſlaughtered their own Sons, Sons their Fathers, Brothers their own Brothers and Siſters, and all this on no other Account but becauſe thoſe miſerable People were of a Religion ſome-

what

what differing from theirs. The like was done by the *Papiſts* of *Ireland*, in the Year 1641, who either cruelly murdered out-right, or cauſed miſerably to periſh about Three Hundred Thouſand innocent *Proteſtants* in the ſaid Iſland. In ſhort, innumerable other Slaughters and moſt horrible Cruelties, from Time to Time, have been committed by Men, thro' the Motives of either Religion, Intereſt, or ſome Punctilio of Honour, all which have been and are ſtill, by ſome ſuch Monſters in Human Form, accounted for honourable Trophies.

THE Laws of both *Jews* and *Mahometans*, and even of moſt *Chriſtians*, permit the Husband to kill his Wife, if he takes her in the Act of Adultery, and likewiſe the Man with whom ſhe commits the Fact. Finally, every

one

one knows, that all the Murders, Ravages and Deeds of Perfidy, which Men commit when they are at War with each other, are not only authoriſed by their reſpective Laws, but are alſo looked on as commendable and glorious Actions. But in Regard to Truth I will add, that notwithſtanding it muſt be acknowledged, that the Majority of *Chriſtians* have been and ſo ſtill continue, the cruelleſt and moſt blood-thirſty People in the whole World, nevertheleſs we are not to impute this either to *Chriſt*, or to his Law, ſince he every where commands Mercy and Equity, but the Fault muſt be laid at the Doors of ſuch *Chriſtians* as act ſo contrary to the Principles of the Goſpel.

Now, among ſuch a Diverſity of Sentiments as we meet with in the World,

World, amidſt ſo ſtrange a Confuſion, I would fain know, where we ſhall find a Man really endowed with ſo much Wiſdom as to teach us, Which are the Things honeſt or diſhoneſt, juſt or unjuſt, good or bad. Many People declare certain Things to be honeſt, juſt and good, they commend and practiſe them: Many others proclaim the ſame Things to be diſhoneſt, unjuſt and bad, they execrate and fly from them. Theſe are Men, and ſo are the others. Who is to be the Judge between them? A Man. Certainly he cannot, becauſe he is a Party. An Angel indeed might determine the Matter between them, did we but know where any of the Angels were to be found: But the Miſchief is, our modern Aſtronomers having forced their Way thro' the Empyreum, and even annihilated its very Name, with the Infinity of Suns and

Planets

Planets which they have diſcovered, have alſo conſequently diſperſed and driven away the very Angels themſelves from their ancient *Paradiſial* Abodes, and now it is not known what is become of them.

WHO then muſt inſtruct us how to diſcern, which are the good and which the bad Morals? An Oracle? A Prophet? Theſe certainly may unveil to us this great Myſtery: But the Difficulty is to know which of them all we are to credit; ſince all of them are different in Opinion.

IF we ſhould give Credit to *Bremau*, the Prophet of the *Brachmans*, or *Gymnoſophiſts*, and of a very conſiderable Part of the *Oriental Indians*, we muſt then condemn what has been taught by *Confucius*, the God *Fohe*, *Moſes*,

ſes, *Chriſt*, *Mahomet*, and ſo many others; becauſe what he taught is quite contrary to what is injoined by the others. If we would believe in *Confucius*, or in *Fohe*, Prophets and Legiſlators of the *Chineſes*, we ſhould be liable to the ſame Inconveniencies. If we believe in *Moſes*, we ſhall diſobey *Chriſt*, and the others; ſince *Moſes*, not long before he died, commanded his People to obſerve for ever the Laws and Statutes which he had taught them, ſuch being the Almighty's Pleaſure. Now whether or no his Precepts were contrary to thoſe of *Chriſt*, we may comprehend by theſe Words. " You know, ſays *Chriſt*, that " *Moſes* commanded you to take an " Eye from him who had deprived " you of one of your Eyes, and a " Tooth from him who had taken a- " way one from you: But I command

" you

" you not to reſiſt thoſe who do Evil " unto you; and if any one ſmites " you on the Right Cheek, preſent " unto him alſo the Left." If we ſubmit to the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, we are obliged to deteſt that of *Mahomet*, and thoſe of all the others. The ſame would happen were we to embrace that of *Mahomet*. Behold then, we are more imbroiled than ever.

I KNOW, that the *Jews* and the *Chriſtians* will tell me, that it is our Duty to acknowledge and believe in the True Prophets, that is, thoſe to whom GOD hath truly manifeſted his Will, as appeared from the Miracles which they performed, and from the particular Graces which the Almighty conceded to them in Proof of their Divine Miſſion: But thoſe who are Followers of the other Prophets

will alſo tell me the very ſame. The Reply made me by the *Firſt* will be: "That the ſaid Prophets performed "their Miracles in the Preſence of "many different Sorts of People, and "that the Truth thereof is atteſt-"ed by many in their ſtill-extant Wri-"tings." The *Second* will encounter me with the ſelf-ſame Argument. The *Firſt* will add, "That abundance have "confirmed the Verity of thoſe Miſ-"ſions with the Spilling of their laſt "vital Blood." The *Second* will like-wiſe alledge; "That they alſo had "and ſtill have Numbers of Martyrs "who ſuffer Death in Defenſe of thoſe "Laws which they received from their "Prophets."

TO whom then are we really to have Recourſe, in order that the naked Truth may appear with regard to the Good-

Goodneſs or Badneſs of Morals? I do not know the Perſon: But this I am moſt certain of; "That if to all the "wiſe Men in the World, who are "not prejudiced in Favour of ſome "Error, was to be put the ſame In-"terrogatory which was put to *Chriſt* "by *Pilate*, when he ſaid to him, "*What is Truth?* they would wiſely, "in Imitation of *Chriſt*, remain ſi-"lent, and would not raſhly pronounce "their Judgment on a Thing they "know not."

SENSIBLE I am, that thoſe who pretend to the Knowledge of what is morally good and morally bad, honeſt and diſhoneſt, do ground that their imagined Knowledge on the Remorſe of Conſcience which Men do feel after having committed a Crime, and on that Bluſhing in the Countenances of thoſe

thoſe who do a diſhoneſt Deed, and on the Joy and Satisfaction People conceive in doing good Actions. Theſe are the ſtrongeſt Reaſons they alledge to prove, that the Notion of good and bad Morals, Honeſty and Diſhoneſty, is ingrafted in us naturally. But every one may eaſily free his Mind from ſo groſs an Error, by conſidering and reflecting, how various and different are the Motives which occaſion Remorſe and Bluſhing; and how the ſame Things which cauſe Remorſe in ſome, give to others the higheſt Satisfaction imaginable.

For Example: A *Chriſtian* will be well pleaſed at hearing *Mahomet* railed againſt; as will a *Jew* to hear *Chriſt* blaſphemed: And both the *one* and the *other*, ſuppoſing they are fully perſuaded of the Verity of their reſpective Religions,

ligions, will conceive the greateſt Horror at hearing their own Prophets ſo blaſphemed; and if by Accident they happen to drop a diſreſpectful Expreſſion concerning them, they are afterwards extremely grieved. In like manner, a *Mahometan* enjoys his four Wives, together with ſeveral Concubines, without ever feeling the leaſt Tincture of Remorſe. On the contrary, a *Chriſtian*, even if he follows looſe Courſes, has his Intervals of Repentance. A *Mahometan* will curſe the *Chriſtian* who ſuffers a cruel Death rather than he will become a *Muſſulman*, and on the very ſame Motive a *Chriſtian* will highly condemn the *Mahometan*; yet they both willingly die Martyrs for their Religion, and both the *one* and the *other* conceive a Joy and Satisfaction in depriving of Life thoſe who are Enemies to their Creed. And it is the ſame

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in all other Human Operations, as we have ſaid and proved in examining the Opinions of many Nations utterly oppoſite and contrary to each other. By all which it is evident, that Remorſe is not natural, but contracted from the Ideas which we form of Things long after our Birth.

For if Remorſe was a Thing innate, all Mankind in general, none excepted, would infallibly feel it in their Conſciences when they have committed Murder, Adultery, Theft, or any other flagrant Crime; which is not ſo, ſince Experience teaches the contrary. From whence we ought to conclude, that Remorſe is no other than the Offspring of Education, or an Effect of the Notions which thoſe who breed us up give us concerning the Goodneſs or Badneſs of Human Actions. As the *Cre-*

tan,

tan and *Chineſe* have not any Horror to the filthy Act of Sodomy, becauſe none ever taught them that the ſame was bad, but their Laws declare it rather to be good, and that they ought to do it. On the contrary, the *Jew* and the *Chriſtian* have it in the utmoſt Abomination, becauſe, almoſt from the very Cradle, they learn that it is a very monſtrous Evil, and in that Belief they are brought up. For the ſame Reaſon, the *Proteſtant Chriſtian* laughs at and deſpiſes Confeſſion, commanded by the *Romiſh* Church, and never feels the leaſt Remorſe for ſo doing: Whereas the *Roman-Catholic* cannot ever enjoy Peace of Mind if he has not Recourſe to his Ghoſtly Father. A *Proteſtant* will trample under Foot and uſe in the moſt ſcornful manner a Conſecrated *Hoſtia*, and will feel great Satisfaction in ſo doing, believing he does

an Action very pleaſing in the Sight of GOD: But a good *Roman-Catholic* will not ever dare to do any ſuch Thing, becauſe he believes he ſhould commit a moſt execrable Sacrilege, and would ſooner ſuffer the moſt cruel Death than commit it. In *Sicily*, *Spain*, *Portugal*, &c. a vertuous Woman, or Maiden, would bluſh extremely to be ſaluted or kiſſed by a Man; or if he ſhould ſee her naked Breaſts: Whereas, at the ſame Time, a *French* or *Engliſh* Damſel, alike vertuous, ſuffers it without the leaſt Diſturbance or Emotion; and this becauſe the *Firſt* have been taught, that thoſe Things are indecent, and the *Second*, that they are allowable: *Et ſic de cæteris.*

LET us then conclude, that the Conſcience which People make of Things called morally good and morally

rally bad is not real; ſeeing that the ſelf-ſame Action which by many People is reputed bad, is by many others pronounced good: And this Notion cannot be innate, becauſe it is not univerſal, but merely local and particular. So that we ought to ſay, if we would ſpeak ſenſibly, that Adultery, Theft, Murder, *&c.* are, by the Laws of ſome Nations, pronounced to be bad Things, and as ſuch condemned; and, by the Laws of ſome other Nations, they are declared to be good, and as ſuch commended; and this according to the Neceſſity the People were under of ſo declaring thoſe Actions, when they firſt formed their Societies, or according to the Motives which the ſeveral Tyrants and Uſurpers had, the more eaſily to hold in Bondage thoſe People whoſe Rights and Liberties they had uſurped.

HENCE, if we would truly diſtinguiſh which is the Local, and not Moral Good or Evil of a Society, we ought to examine which are the Things which contribute to the public Quiet and Happineſs, and to call thoſe Things good; as alſo thoſe others which conduce towards its Diſquiet and Ruin, and to call them Evil: And in this Caſe, the ſaid Society may, with all Certainty, know what Things are good, and venerate them, and what are evil, and condemn them: But what may have been received by one Nation, and may be convenient for it, ought not, nor cannot ſerve as an infallible Rule to all the reſt, ſince it may be to their Detriment; "Becauſe Human Laws "and Inſtitutions are not unlike to cer-"tain Simples, which to ſome Bodies "are ſalubrious Remedies, and to o-"thers they are mortal Poiſons."

BESIDES,

Besides, if we examine into the Cauſes of Human Operations, we ſhall diſcover them not to be free, but conſtrained: So that the Actions of Men not being voluntary, they are not therefore to be blamed for what they do, be it ever ſo bad; ſince there is not any Thing bad but what is ſpontaneous. All Beings then, anſwerably to their Organizations and the Motions given them, are determined to operate after ſuch or ſuch a Manner: If in their Operations they meet any with any Obſtacle, or any Thing to impede their natural Courſe, they neither do themſelves ſuffer Violence, nor cauſe others to ſuffer it; but if the ſaid natural Courſe be hindered or interrupted, thoſe Beings become diſordered, and alſo put into Diſorder whatever other Beings they meet with, thro' the Efforts they uſe to operate according to their Nature.

For

For Example: The Nature of Smoke is to aſcend. If it can freely exhale thro' the Air, it occaſions not any Damage at all: But if it finds itſelf pent up in any Place whence it cannot evaporate, that whole Space and Circumference by little and little fills with its tenuous Particles, and if any Animals are there, they therewith are ſuffocated.

In like Manner, the Nature of a rapid Torrent is to haſten towards a lower Bed: If it meets not with any Obſtacle in its Courſe, it does no Miſchief; but if a huge Rock, looſened from the impending Mountain, ſtops its Paſſage, it preſently ſwells, overflows its Banks, drowns the neighbouring Plains and ruins all the Vegetables, &c. there growing.

THE Nature of a large flouriſhing Tree, alſo, is not to drop its Limbs, or to fall down on the Ground, but to have its Limbs ſtrongly knit together, and to increaſe proportionably to the radical Moiſture it contains: Notwithſtanding this, a furious Guſt of Wind ſhall diſmember it, or perhaps quite root it up and caſt it on the Earth, and with the Fall it may kill ſeveral Reptiles, and deſtroy a Number of Plants and Shrubs which lived and grew underneath.

LET us now ſuppoſe, that the *Beings* which were damaged by the *Smoke*, the *Torrent* and the *Tree*, had Utterance and ſhould complain: The *Animals* would ſay to the *Smoke*; "Why didſt "thou ſuffocate us?" The *Vegetables* to the *Torrent*; "Why didſt thou over-"flow and drown us?" And the *Reptiles*,

tiles, Plants, &c. to the great *Tree*; "Why didſt thou cruſh and deſtroy "us with thy enormous Weight?" The *Firſt* would reply; "Becauſe I "could not freely exhale my ſelf thro' "the Air." The *Second* would anſwer; "Becauſe the Rock turned me "from my Courſe, and compelled me "to ſally out of my Bounds." And the *Third* would ſay; "Becauſe I was "not able to reſiſt or withſtand the "Fury of the impetuous Wind. Com-"plain therefore (*all Three would ſay, "and with abundance of Reaſon*) of "thoſe who, conſtrained us to do as "we did, and not of us, who acted "contrary to our Wills and Natures; "for it is not we who are the Au-"thors of either yours or our own "Damages."

HENCE may we comprehend, that Men are not blameable when they commit Crimes; ſince, by various Cauſes, they are compelled ſo to do. Suppoſe, for Example, a very honeſt Man is, thro' ſeveral unexpected Accidents, reduced to Poverty: For ſome Time, his honourable Principles, together with the Dread of Puniſhment, here and hereafter, refrain him from Theft or Robbery: But afterwards, his Miſery increaſing, he expoſes himſelf to a diſtant and uncertain Evil to avoid one which is moſt certain and preſent: Thus he reſolves upon a Robbery, being ſure that thereby he may ſomewhat alleviate his Miſery; and the more willingly becauſe, hoping not to be diſcovered, he flatters himſelf that he may preſerve his Reputation, eſcape the Puniſhment of

Man, and alſo appeaſe the Almighty by Repentance: This Man being now determined on the Enterpriſe, he may likewiſe kill the Perſon whom he goes to rob, on account of the Reſiſtance he makes, or perhaps to avoid his being by him detected, and delivered into the Hands of Juſtice; yet this Robber does not take away the other's Life out of any Hatred he bore him, but merely thro' the Neceſſity he lies under of Self-Preſervation: From all which it plainly appears, that the mere Neceſſity of providing himſelf with Requiſites to prevent his periſhing with Cold and Hunger, and his being detected, cauſed him to commit both Theft and Murder, neither of which Crimes he would ever have committed had he not wanted Neceſſaries,

In like manner, a young Virgin, ſhut up in a Cloiſter, or held in unſufferable Slavery and Confinement by her Parents, will be guilty of frequent Pollutions and many other lewd and indecent Practiſes, in ſome Meaſure to mitigate the Boilings of her Concupiſcence, becauſe ſhe cannot gratify the forcible Stimulations of Nature, being thus ſeparated from Men.

This fooliſh and unjuſt Separation of the different Sexes of our Species, which is practiſed in many Places, occaſions not only ſuch Pollutions, but has alſo contaminated and perverted the natural Genius of Men: As we evidently ſee throughout the Dominions of the *Mahometans* and *Roman-Catholics*, the Majority of whole Females are ſhut up in *Seraglios* and

Convents, and where the Husbands are exceſſively jealous, the Men, for Want of Women, addict themſelves to the deteſtable Practiſe of Sodomy. Some may tell me, there are Sodomites alſo in *England* and *Holland*, tho' the Women have there a very great Liberty. But I ſhall anticipate them, by ſaying, Firſt, That they are in very ſmall Numbers in Compariſon with thoſe to be met with in the Countries I mentioned; and Secondly, That even moſt of thoſe few who do it, are ſuch as are unmarried, and are either poor, miſerly, timorous or ugly; and, not having Women of their own, and not being able, thro' their Poverty, Avarice, Fearfulneſs or Deformity, to corrupt thoſe of their Neighbours; and alſo, on another Hand, being apprehenſive of being infected by

by reſorting to ſuch as are too common, and being likewiſe weary of their over-frequent manual-Pollutions, they fall into this accurſed Vice, not having other Means of cooling their Libidiny.

I KNOW that many People are Thieves and Sodomites, without their being neceſſitated by any of theſe Cauſes above-cited as Cauſes of ſo doing; and truly theſe ſeem to be very blame-worthy, becauſe they ſteal, having wherewithal to live, and abuſe Catamites, having it in their Power to make Uſe of the proper Sex. There are ſome who attribute theſe Diſorders to a bad Inclination or Nature inherent in theſe Men, being in themſelves naturally diſpoſed to Evil; but they are miſtaken: Since Human Nature,

Nature, ſimply conſidered, diſpoſes not either to Good or Evil, but merely to Self-Preſervation, as we ſee in other Animals, and in Men really Savage, or intirely free and independent of each other, all which practiſe whatſoever they think neceſſary for their Support, or for which they have an Appetite, without examining whether it be good or bad, honeſt or diſhoneſt, juſt or unjuſt: But it is not ſo with thoſe we call Civilized Men, who have ſtrayed away from the Laws of Nature in order to ſubmit to other Laws of their own eſtabliſhing, and oppoſite to the original ones in almoſt every Reſpect; ſince theſe teach, that certain Things are good and juſt, and muſt be done, and that certain other Things are bad and unjuſt, and muſt be avoided; ſo in this Manner Human Nature is become

come changed and perverted; in as much that as Men have pronounced many Things for good which, *in rerum naturâ*, are bad, and abundance of other Things are cried down by them as bad which, *in rerum naturâ*, are really good, they have totally contaminated their Minds; since their natural Ideas being changed, their Inclinations become also changed, but not intirely: Because *Nature*, reigning in the Hearts of Men, urges them to obey her, and *Education*, being poſſeſſed of their Intellectuals, conſtrains them to do Things which offend Nature. From this perpetual Contraſt all Diſorders are derived, as we may ſee in the following Examples.

A VIRGIN, prepoſſeſſed in Favour of Virginity, will conſtantly deſpiſe the

the ſweet ſoothing Remedies which the benign Mother Nature ſhall preſent for the Eaſement of her Pains, to lead a moſt unhappy Life under the cruel Yoke of Education; and this, truly, becauſe ſhe ſtupidly believes Barrenneſs to be a ſuperlative Good, when it is no other than a ſuperlative Evil, as tending to the Annihilation of the Species.

On the contrary, another Virgin, notwithſtanding the ſtrong Stimulations of Honour, ſhall be forced by Nature to yield to the Deſires of a faithful Lover, and in a ſhort Space of Time ſhall reap the Fruit of his ſweet Embraces. "My deareſt Babe! "(*will ſhe cry*) how tenderly do I "love thee; becauſe thou art the "pretty, innocent and lovely Pro-

"duct

" duct of my Love! Yet I pierce thy
" Veins! by thy Death to conceal that
" my Shame and Infamy which thou
" by living haſt unvoluntarily divulg-
" ed! If the juſteſt and moſt delecta-
" ble Actions can truly be termed
" ſhameful and infamous! Pardon me
" then, thou dear and moſt beloved
" Pledge of my tendereſt Affections, if
" I deprive thee of that Being which I
" gave thee; ſince the taking away thy
" Life is the ſole Means of preſerving
" both my Life and my Honour! And
" thou, O Sacred NATURE! who
" knoweſt the wretched Condition of
" Mankind, compelled by the Vio-
" lence of thy fierceſt Enemy, *Edu-*
" *cation*, to perpetrate Deeds which are
" ſo very repugnant and contrary to thy
" Wiſdom and thy Juſtice! grant thy
" Pardon to thoſe who, conſtrained to

" offend thee, chuſe always the leaſt " Offence, as I have done in killing " my pretty Babe to preſerve my own " Life and Reputation!"

In theſe, and in ſtill ſtronger and more pathetic Accents, would the diſconſolate and innocent Mother, with very great Reaſon, lament her Miſery. And with the very ſame Reaſons might a Murderer, a Thief, or any other Delinquents excuſe themſelves; becauſe, either by Nature, by Education, or by Habitude, they are always forced to their Operations, as has before been intimated.

Education and Habitude are a Second Nature, and as ſuch are capable of corrupting and changing the natural Diſpoſitions both of the Mind and

and Body; ſince we ſee that a Man who has habituated himſelf in a Belief or Opinion, tho' ever ſo falſe and abſurd, as is that of *Tranſubſtantiation*, or any other Trumpery no leſs ſtupid and ridiculous, he cannot abandon it, notwithſtanding Reaſon and all the Senſes are continually convincing him of its Falſity.

In like Manner we know, that Nature has given to Men an Equality of Strength in their Arms: Nevertheleſs, he who, for the greateſt Part of his Life, has uſed his Left Arm, will have his Right Arm abundantly weaker, and it will be of very little Uſe to him, in Compariſon with the other.

We know likewiſe, that a Clown, who has long habituated his Ear to the diſmal, diſcording Tone of a caterwauling Bag-pipe, will always prefer the rude Noiſe of that vile Inſtrument to the perfect Harmony of the fineſt Opera. For the ſame Reaſon, the Inhabitants of ſome wild Mountains, *&c.* who have conſtantly been accuſtomed to drink only Water, and to feed on coarſe Bread, would be greatly put to it were they to eat a few Days at a great Man's Table, where they muſt drink the richeſt Wines, and eat the moſt dainty Cates, but not be allowed any Water, nor ſuch black Bread as they uſed to feed on. So alſo a Bird, grown old in a Cage, and always fed with hard-boiled Eggs, if let looſe in a Wood, where Numbers of its own Species joyfully feed

feed themſelves with Fruits, Seeds, or Herbs, would periſh with Hunger, not being uſed to thoſe Foods.

But fully to demonſtrate the ſtrange Potency of Habitude, it ſuffices to ſay, that it can even blot out of the Hearts of Creatures the very Love and Deſire of Liberty, and make them fond of Confinement. This we may obſerve in thoſe Birds which are brought in their Neſts and bred up in Cages, wherein they are grown old, which, even if the Door is left open, love rather to remain Priſoners in that narrow Confinement, than to go out and enjoy the Pleaſures of the delightſome Fields, and to ſport themſelves in the vaſt Regions of the Air.

THE like happens to Men when, thro' ſome tedious Indiſpoſition, or other Accident, they have been many Years confined within Doors, they never care to go out afterwards: And I my ſelf remember to have ſeen a *Turkiſh* Slave, in one of the *Malteſe* Gallies, who was aged above Sixty, of which Time he had paſſed Forty Years in Chains, and had got together a conſiderable Sum of Money by Trading, yet did he refuſe to purchaſe his Liberty, which was offered him for a very Trifle, ſaying; "He "could never live contentedly in "changing the Condition of Life to "which he had habituated himſelf."

FROM hence I conclude, that if Habitude or Uſe can induce Men to deſpiſe Liberty, the choiceſt Viands

and

and the ſweeteſt Harmony, for the Sake of Bondage, and of Things Coarſe and inſipid; it can alſo make a Man, who has been accuſtomed to commit Sodomy in his Youth (when he was at ſome College, or Univerſity, where thoſe youthful Filthineſſes are practiſed) to continue in that abominable and depraved Taſte, and to hate the Female Sex ſo long as he lives.

After the ſame Manner, another who has been accuſtomed to live in Grandeur, happening to be reduced to a lower Ebb of Fortune than will ſuffice to ſatisfy that Ambition habituated in him, does no worſe in Stealing, to gratify it, than does he in whom Honour is habituated, and kills the Perſon who goes about to rob him

him of it; and as it is impoſſible for a Perſon truly honourable to ſuffer the leaſt Injury offered to his Honour without reſenting it, ſo likewiſe is it impoſſible for a Perſon who is ambitious not to put in practiſe all the Methods which he thinks proper to ſatisfy his Ambition; and for the luſtful Man thoſe which will gratify his Luſt; and for the covetous Miſer ſuch as will content his Avarice; and laſtly, for the vindictive Man thoſe which may ſatiate his Revenge: "For Human Paſſions "are like the Winds, of which the "ſtrongeſt hurries away the Ship where-"ever they pleaſe, without conſulting "its able Pilot; and juſt ſo does the "predominant Paſſion determine the "Actions of Man, without conſult-"ing Reaſon."

Nor-

NOTWITHSTANDING that I have proved Men not to be eſſentially blameable for the Crimes they commit, ſince they are always forced either by Education or Habitude to commit them; yet, in Regard to Truth, I muſt alſo ſay, that I do acknowledge that there really are ſuch Things as Phyſical Good and Phyſical Evil, the which I will ſet down, to the End that Men may, by purſuing the one and flying from the other, make themſelves happy.

PHYSICAL Good and Evil, then, do conſiſt either in obeying, or in tranſgreſſing the moſt Sacred Laws of Nature: We obey them, in granting her whatever ſhe deſires; we tranſgreſs them, in oppoſing her juſt Pleaſures, or in doing Violence to

her; and this is done by depriving Nature of thoſe Things for which ſhe has an Appetite, or by forcing her to do what ſhe does not deſire: From Obedience is derived the Phyſical Good, and from Tranſgreſſion derives the Phyſical Evil.

Let us expreſs ourſelves more clearly. Provident Nature has ever formed all Things which were neceſſary for the Maintenance of her Creatures, and has always given to each Individual a full Liberty of making Uſe of every Thing requiſite and convenient for it, and never failed to endow it with a Knowledge to diſcern the good from the bad, that it might enjoy the one and abſtain from the other. Becauſe as all the Productions of Nature are perfectly

good,

good, when applied to the Uſe of thoſe Creatures for whom the ſame were produced, nevertheleſs they become moſt pernicious, when employed for the Service of other Creatures for whom they were not deſigned. Moreover wiſe Nature has always beſtowed on them a proper Senſation, to direct them in all their Operations: By this, when Animal Creatures are wearied, they feel that they are in Need of Reſt; when hungry, of Food; when thirſty, of Drink; when they are ſtimulated with the Motions of Concupiſcence, they require Coition; and ſo of all the other Neceſſities to which each of them is ſubject, according to its reſpective Species. If therefore they grant to Nature that which ſhe requires, they enjoy a good State of

Health, and live long and happily; but if they are not obedient to her Will, but either deprive themſelves of what is neceſſary for them, or do Violence to Nature by drinking when they are not thirſty, eating when not hungry, uſing Coition when not ſtimulated by the Fleſh, and in ſhort by any Kind of Exceſs, they are ſeverely puniſhed for their Tranſgreſſion, with Pains, Diſeaſes, and frequently with untimely Death: "So "jealous of her Laws is the *Goddeſs* "NATURE!"

THESE her Laws may be tranſgreſſed diverſe Ways; ſuch are Superſtition, Avarice, Ambition, and Falſe Honour: Since when theſe poſſeſs themſelves of Human Minds, they deprive Reaſon and the Senſes

of

of their Faculties, and render them impotent; and from this Impotency of Reaſon and the Senſes Mens Miſery and Slavery deduce their Origin: So that if Men would avoid thoſe Evils, they neceſſarily muſt govern themſelves according to the Dictates of Reaſon and their Senſes, and not according to the pernicious Maxims of thoſe accurſed Children of Education.

NATURE's Scope in the Creation of Animals is, as we have obſerved, their Felicity: But becauſe ſhe knows that Men, thro' the Fragility of their Intellects, may eaſily loſe it, the Goddeſs Nature, I ſay, always juſt and benign, that Mankind might not have Cauſe to complain of her, as a cruel Stepmother, rather than a

kind

kind compaſſionate Mother, gives them Life, on this Condition; that they enjoy the ſame ſo long as it is ſweet and agreeable, and that they may reſtore it to her immediately when it becomes loathſome: Seeing that Nature, having propoſed Man's Good and not his Ill, and being an irreconcileable Enemy to all Violence, cannot compel him to live when he is become miſerable or unhappy. To this Effect, ſhe has given to Men an intire Liberty to quit Life when it is become troubleſome to them.

THAT this is the true Intention of Nature, cannot be doubted; ſince to every one it is apparent, that there are a Thouſand Doors open whereat to iſſue out of this vital Priſon,

ſon, which could not have been, had not Nature left them ſo.

THESE Truths being known, a Man ought not to be apprehenſive he is doing Ill when, tired and tormented by Life, he deprives himſelf of it; ſeeing he therein makes Uſe of a Right which none can take from him. This is a Right which does not only belong to Man, but alſo to all other Animal Creatures, the which do know how to make a better Uſe of it than he does; ſince they, having always lived according to the Natural Laws, their Intellectuals have not been corrupted by Education: For which Reaſon, when any of them happen to loſe their Liberty in their Old Age, or after their having been long accuſtomed

to

to the Enjoyment of it, they always prefer Death to Bondage: And I myſelf remember to have ſeen, beſides the Scorpion which ſtings itſelf to Death when ſurrounded with burning Coals, diverſe Animals, both Winged and Quadrupedes, which would famiſh themſelves with Hunger and Thirſt, tho' they had both Drink and Food more than ſufficient; and this becauſe they could not enjoy any Conſolation on account of their having loſt that Bleſſing, with the Value whereof they had been ſo long acquainted.

A MAN ought not to believe he does any Wrong to the Society he chances to be a Member of, in depriving himſelf of Life: For Societies were founded for the Benefit

of

of Men; and therefore when a Man ceaſes from reaping Benefit therefrom, with Reaſon he may therefrom ſeparate himſelf, and more eſpecially if the ſaid Society was formed without his Approbation or Concurrence; ſince no Man is tied down to ſtand to any Agreement made without his Participation, or againſt his Will: And notwithſtanding the *Jews*, the *Chriſtians*, and the *Mahometans* pretend the contrary, by forcing People to continue in the Religion wherein they are born, I do aver and maintain, that this Violence is unjuſt and abominable; ſince a Man is no more tied to be a *Jew*, a *Chriſtian*, or a *Mahometan*, on account of his having been Circumciſed, or Baptiſed, when he was an Infant, than if his Parents, or the

Prieſts, at his Birth, had bound him to love (when arrived at Man's Eſtate) a Woman to whoſe Beauties or Deformities, good or bad Qualities, he ſhould be an utter Stranger.

A MAN is not an Enemy to his Exiſtence when, quite tired and oppreſſed, either with Poverty, or Contempt, or Sickneſs, or Bondage, he ſhall voluntarily ceaſe to live: Since, if it be a Thing natural always to chuſe the leaſt Evil when Evils are not poſſibly to be avoided, it is a moſt natural Thing to have Recourſe to Death, to get free from the Evils and Miſeries of Life: So let us ſuppoſe Men not liable to thoſe Calamities which moleſt them during their Life, nevertheleſs ought they always to run to Death without

ſtaying

ſtaying for it; ſince they all know that, by a Decree eternal, they are condemned to die from the very Moment they are born; and as the Sort of Death each Man is to die is uncertain, and as moſt Sorts are very painful, a wiſe Man, finding himſelf to be approaching his End and Diſſolution, either thro' Age, or the Indiſpoſitions attending him, and not having the leaſt Hope or Proſpect of ever enjoying any more of the Pleaſures of Life, would do a moſt wiſe Action in making Choice of the Kind of Death which appeared to him to be the pleaſanteſt, in order to evade that moſt grievous one to which he is ſentenced: And in ſo doing, he would demonſtrate himſelf a true Friend to Himſelf.

In ſhort, a Man ought not to imagine that, in depriving himſelf of Life, he any way diſcompoſes the Order of Providence; ſince the eternal Laws of Motion cannot, in any wiſe, be varied, or altered, on account of a Creature's living a longer or ſhorter Space of Time, that is, its changing ſooner or later the Modifications of its Matter: Becauſe Nature being moſt potent and moſt wiſe, and operating inceſſantly in all Matter, the Conſequence is, that her Operations are always ſuperlatively perfect; ſo that it little imports that the Matter which formed the Body of a Man aſſumes the Form of a Million of Worms, or of other Beings, that of round it becomes quadrangular or multangular; the ſmalleſt Atom is ever of

ſome

ſome ſignal Utility to the infinite Deſigns of that moſt induſtrious Architect.

THE fooliſh Prepoſſeſſion, which Men have in Favour of their own Species, is a Child of Ambition, and this is the Child of Education: Since, even from their very Birth they are taught, that *They are the moſt* perfect *of all* Beings; *as being the* lively Images *of* GOD, *who created all the* others *purely for* their *Uſe and Service.* Reaſon being confuſed and rendered ſtupid with theſe vain and nonſenſical Ideas, Man believes that the Deſtruction of one of his Kind, or Species, muſt needs put into Diſorder the whole Frame of Nature; and does not conſider, " That a Man more " or a Man leſs, nay the whole Race

" of

" of Mankind united, and a Hundred
" Millions of Worlds, a Thousand
" times greater and more beautiful
" than this our Terreſtrial Globe, are
" no other than a very diminutive Atom,
" whoſe exiſting or not exiſting is not
" ſo much, with reſpect to the Im-
" menſity of the Univerſe, as is a ſin-
" gle Drop of Water in Compariſon
" with the vaſt Ocean!"

LET us then conclude, *That a* Man, *weary or ſatiated with* living, *may* die *when he pleaſes, without offending* NATURE: *Since in* dying, *he makes Uſe of the* Remedy *which* She *kindly has put into his Hands, wherewithal he may cure himſelf of the Evils of this* LIFE.

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